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The
American Historical Review

THE PRUSSIAN CAMPAIGN OF 1758, I.¹

[THE following pages contain the last historical work of the late Herbert Tuttle, Professor of Modern European History in Cornell University. Shortly after his untimely death, Houghton, Mifflin and Co. published what was thought to be all that the deceased historian had completed of his *History of Prussia*. It seems, however, that this was not the case. When Professor Tuttle left Ithaca for the last time for Clifton Springs, in 1894, he packed up with several books the manuscript on which he had last been working, in the hope that his health would permit him to continue his labors. Mrs. Tuttle was unaware of this and entrusted to the publishers only the completed chapters that appeared in book form with a sympathetic memoir by Professor Herbert B. Adams. The chapter now presented to the readers of the AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW, and presenting an account of the campaign of 1758, extending to October, bears characteristic marks of the ripe knowledge and scholarly workmanship which made Professor Tuttle's *History of Prussia* the best authority in the English language upon the subject. Special mention should be made of the care he displayed in examining the primary sources of the period. He went to the expense of having copied for him in London much of the correspondence of the Duke of Newcastle, which is preserved in the British Museum and the importance of which has only recently been made known to students of the history of the eighteenth century. The love of truth, grasp of the period and minute care to assure correctness of detail, which distinguished all the work of the historian of Prussia, show no diminution in the last paragraphs that came from his hand. The editors of the AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW hereby express their gratitude to Mrs. Mary McArthur Tuttle for her kindness in permitting them to publish in its pages the last contribution to history made by her accomplished husband.]

H. MORSE STEPHENS.

If the year 1757 was remarkable for the tardy close, the following year was not less remarkable for the early opening of hostilities,

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so that the period of general rest was short. It was quite in the fitness of things too that the Russians, who were then the first to retire, should now be the first to begin. Apraxin's successor, General Fermor, like Apraxin himself, was not a man from whom much was expected by those who knew the scale of military reputations at the Russian capital; but his sovereign's orders were now imperative, his troops were hardened to severe weather, and in the middle of January he marched upon the capital of Preussen at the head of thirty thousand men. No opposition was made to his progress. Lehwaldt was in Pomerania; and as all available resources were needed for defending the rest of his dominions, Frederic now dropped Preussen, as he had before dropped the western provinces, out of his system of operations. The few battalions of militia fled on the approach of the enemy, and on the twenty-second of January Fermor made his triumphant entry into Königsberg. The leading magnates were notified that by the law of conquest the dominion of the province was transferred to the empress of the Russias. In harmony with this fiction the cruel policy of plunder and destruction observed by Apraxin the year before was abandoned for one of conciliation; the people were promised the maintenance of their laws and institutions; strict discipline was enforced; and Frederic refused to forgive his subjects of Preussen for the apparent ease with which they accepted the yoke of the invader. He never again set foot in the province.¹

While Fermor paused for rest after this arduous achievement the fires of war were suddenly lighted in another part of the field; the signal gun from Preussen was answered on the plains of Hanover. During the winter a change again took place in the chief command of the French army. Marshal Richelieu went back to Paris laden with spoils if not with glory;² and in his place came, in February, the Count of Clermont, a man in clerical orders, with little or no military talent, but a prince of the house of Bourbon, and a favorite at the court of Versailles. In the hour of his disgrace French satire wrote and French urchins sang in the streets that he preached like a soldier and fought like a priest.³ But among his many faults too great confidence was evidently not one. His first reports were full of complaints about the bad condition of the army, the inadequate quarters, the deficient supplies, about the hospitals crowded with sick, and the rosters glaring with falsehood;⁴ and other ac-

¹ See Preuss, II. 161, 162.

² Barbier, VII. 16, 17, gives the amount of debts which he paid from the proceeds of his campaign at 1,110,000 livres.

³ Il prêche comme un soldat

Et se bat comme un apôtre.

⁴ Clermont to Paulmy, 18 February 1758, printed by Stuhr, ii. Beilage, pp. 423-426.

counts confirm his description in all its sombre details. In the rival army the interval had been used for reform and preparation, so that by the middle of February Prince Ferdinand had over thirty thousand men, including fifteen squadrons of Prussian cavalry sent by Lehwaldt from Pomerania, ready for service in the field. Prince Henry undertook to make a diversion from the side of Halberstadt. Thus prepared, Ferdinand's plan was to force the enemy out of their positions along the Weser, to give battle if they showed fight, and to drive them if possible across the Rhine. The attempt succeeded perhaps even beyond his own expectation. By a wise strategy, a bold demeanor, prompt movements, and an unflagging energy Ferdinand forced the enemy out of their positions in Brunswick and Hanover; frustrated all their attempts, which were indeed feeble enough, to make a stand; carried one after another the strategic towns where they had left garrisons on their original invasion; and thus steadily rolled back their line toward the Rhine itself, behind which they retired, near Wesel, in the first days of April. The greater part of Soubise's corps was also swept along by the current, and crossed the same river in the vicinity of Düsseldorf. Even East Friesland was evacuated by the French, so great was the panic.

These repeated disasters of France in the field had a momentous and far-reaching effect upon her relations with Russia. It is hard indeed to define these relations during the first part of the Seven Years' War in the terms of modern diplomacy. Though the two powers were nominally enlisted on the same side, they were not allies and scarcely even friends; for after ten years of alienation some constraint of course remained, no direct treaty bound them together, and the Polish question even held them apart. Hence the two courts of Vienna and Versailles looked on the Russian participation with different eyes. The empress-queen welcomed it with an open heart and few reserves; agreed to the cessions of territory demanded in return; and seemed to acquiesce in the policy of Elizabeth at Warsaw. But what Austria welcomed as a positive good France barely tolerated as a necessary evil. Louis himself and his ministers watched the progress of the Russian arms therefore with mixed feelings of delight and doubt: delight, because it weakened Frederic of Prussia, the common foe; doubt, because it increased at the cost of France the influence of Russia in Poland. But French statesmen were not agreed upon the extent to which their attitude toward Russia ought to be affected by their policy at Warsaw. Bernis and Stainville, the chief representatives of the official diplomacy, agreed in making the Russian alliance first in the order of

importance. Count Broglie and those who were admitted to the secret correspondence insisted, on the other hand, that a complete reconciliation with Russia would be suicidal ; that a jealous distrust should mark all relations with that court ; and that the ancient maxims of French statecraft, which aimed to support Poland and Turkey as barriers against Muscovite ambition, should be maintained in all their integrity. Between these two extremes Louis himself wavered, inclining now toward one side, now toward the other. Before Rossbach he gave some support to Broglie, looked with alarm upon the presence of the Russian army in Poland, and even procured from Brühl and Elizabeth the dismissal of Poniatowski, whose influence over Catherine was held to be full of danger. If the French had won at Rossbach, they would doubtless have assumed a still bolder tone. But the defeat shattered the prestige of their arms, and when Leuthen followed, the need of active aid from Russia became so urgent that the double policy was for a time suspended. By the assent of Louis the lover of Catherine was restored to her arms, a private correspondence was begun between the two monarchs and Count Broglie left Poland in disgust. For a time Louis seemed to acquiesce in the sway of Russian influence at Warsaw ; and in spite of occasional attempts afterwards, that of France was never fully regained. On these events certain French writers base a bold yet mournful generalization. It is possible, they suggest, to take the humiliating defeat at Rossbach as the starting-point in that series of blunders and crimes which led to the extinction of Poland, the gradual dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, and the rise of Russia on the ruins of both.¹ Next in the sad procession came the retreat of Richelieu from the Elbe, and now Clermont had added a fresh disgrace by his wild flight across the Rhine.

At this time, however, the relations of both France and Austria with the court of St. Petersburg were put on a better footing, and Frederic's enemies were filled with new hopes, by the overthrow of Bestuschef. The papers of Apraxin revealed, so it was reported, the chancellor's connection with treasonable plots ;² and on the twenty-fifth of February, 1758, he was placed under arrest in his own house. A special tribunal found him guilty of the charge and recommended the penalty of death, which, however, Elizabeth commuted to a species of exile. He was stripped of all his titles and honors, banished to his estates in the country, and ordered to remain there during the pleasure of the empress. His office was

¹ See, e. g., Broglie, *Secret du Roi*, I. 292.

² See Esterhazy's reports printed by Schaefer, II. 544 seq., and that of the English ambassador in Raumer, II. 456.

turned over to the vice-chancellor, Woronzof, a less able and ambitious man, but more agreeable to the courts of Vienna and Versailles.

The fall of Bestuschef was undoubtedly connected with the retreat of Apraxin after the battle of Gross-Jägersdorf, but just where the point of connection lay is still an unsolved problem. It is true that a well-defined theory, which modern historians have generally accepted, makes the marshal's singular movement the result of positive orders from the chancellor,¹ who needed the army for the support of a daring scheme that he had formed. The empress was ill, mortally ill it was supposed. Bestuschef's scheme was to anticipate her death by a *coup d' état*, which should exclude the Grand Duke Peter from the throne, and proclaim the young prince who was Catherine's son, if not her husband's, as emperor, with Catherine herself as regent during his minority. When Peter learned of this plot to rob him of his expected heritage he sought the Austrian ambassador, who advised him to appeal to Elizabeth. The result was the arrest and condemnation of the chancellor; and soon afterwards Catherine herself, seeing that the game was lost, threw herself at the feet of the empress, made a full confession and was restored to favor, while the unlucky Bestuschef went into exile. But the general theory thus outlined had many minor shades or varieties, and is not yet supported by evidence which a historian can regard as conclusive. Masslowski absolutely rejects that very essential part of it which concerns the retreat of Apraxin. The statement generally made at the time and embodied in the reports of the foreign envoys,² that Apraxin's papers betrayed the minister, is also perhaps subject to some qualification. The reports of Esterhazy seem to show that the worst documents were found among Bestuschef's own papers after his arrest, not among those of the marshal;³ and the Saxon secretary of legation at St. Petersburg asserts that he saw the mysterious writings, and that they were revealed by the chancellor himself before his arrest, and that while they suggested a secret and irregular connection with Peter and Catherine, they also showed that he used his influence with them, and their influence with Apraxin, to animate not to paralyze the campaign in Preussen.⁴ But Prasse's testimony is that of a man

¹ Esterhazy in his report 25 April 1758, printed by Schaefer, II., i. Beilage, p. 545, is positive on this point. Schaefer gives other extracts from the reports of the Austrian ambassador.

² By the English ambassador, for example, 14 March 1758. Raumer, II. 456.

³ Schaefer, *ubi supra*.

⁴ This is confirmed by Bilbassof, *Geschichte Katharinas II.*, German translation by Pezold, I. 415 seq., who brings out the conclusive fact that Elizabeth's sudden illness occurred after Apraxin's council of war had advised a retreat and orders had been issued accordingly.

who still believed in Bestuschef, and in his bewilderment he suggests that the whole intrigue was a trap set for him by the French and Austrian ambassadors.¹ This also was a favorite theory in the gossip of the time. But a French writer of weight states positively that L'Hôpital, though instructed often in a sense unfriendly to the grand chancellor, became convinced of his good faith and contributed nothing to his overthrow; and Arneth renders a similar verdict of acquittal for Esterhazy, in which he has the support of Kaunitz himself.² What then was the secret of the powerful minister's fall? In view of the contradictory rumors and statements it is perhaps safest to answer that in all probability it was not any single act, or the discovery of any specific treason; it is rather to be sought in the tardy revolt of the empress against the authority of a man who had been guilty of many suspicious measures, who was notoriously corrupt and whose fall the allied courts earnestly desired. She had meditated his dismissal at the time of the treaty of Westminster between Prussia and England. The retreat of Apraxin, of which France and Austria bitterly complained, strengthened her suspicions; and the written evidence of Bestuschef's intrigues with the "young court" completed her aversion, and nerved her to act.³

Frederic himself received the news from St. Petersburg with calmness or even indifference. Experience had taught him that the chancellor was a frail reed on which to lean, and he was now more than ever convinced that the sword would have to decide.⁴ Notwithstanding the terrible losses of the year, he hoped to begin the next campaign with not less than two hundred thousand men, including sixty thousand garrison troops, part of whom could, however, render some service in the field.⁵ The cantonal system of inland levies was enforced with the utmost rigor, and all material which this left untouched was reaped as an aftermath by the provincial militia organizations. Recruiting in the free cities of the Empire and in foreign countries was still kept up, though naturally

¹ Herrmann, *Gesch. Russlands*, V. 216 seq.

² Vandal, *Louis XV. et Élisabeth de Russie*, p. 322; Arneth, V. 286. But cf. L'Hôpital to Bernis, 30 November 1757, where the French ambassador reports on the authority of Esterhazy himself very direct and earnest appeals made by him (Esterhazy) to the empress to dismiss Bestuschef. *Recueil des Instructions, Russie*, II. 70.

³ On Elizabeth's threats and promises respecting Bestuschef see Esterhazy, 20 January 1758, *apud* Arneth, V. 284, 285, and L'Hôpital, 29 January 1758, *apud* Vandal, p. 321 n.

⁴ Frederic to Prince Henry, 13 March 1758. To Sir Robert Keith, the new English minister to St. Petersburg, who visited Breslau on his way to his post, Frederic cynically insisted that money was the only effective agent in Russia. *Pol. Cor.*, XVI. 230. Cf. Keith's report 30 March 1758, *apud* Mahon, *Hist. of Eng.*, V., App., p. xxii.

⁵ Schaefer, II. i. 62.

with many drawbacks. One Colonel Collignon had charge of this business under a contract with the king ; and he in turn employed a set of sub-contractors, whose zeal was sharpened and whose scruples were dulled by the bounty of ten thalers a head paid to them for recruits.¹ For the loss finally of the usual contingents from Preussen and the Rhenish provinces an equivalent was found in Saxony, where the conscription was applied with cruel, not to say vindictive, severity. In meeting the financial problem there was the same mixture of heroic measures with measures that were desperate and unscrupulous. No tax was increased in rate, and no loan contracted.² But the screws of economy were sternly applied in every branch of the government ; the officials were paid in depreciated paper ; and debased coins continued to pour out of the mints. The Saxons suffered even more of course under Frederic's policy than his own people. In addition to the ordinary revenues, which were administered with an iron hand, frequent special contributions were levied on cities or districts of the electorate until the cries of the unhappy victims were heard in every part of Europe. The same policy was early introduced in Mecklenburg, and enforced with the same harshness, though with somewhat less regularity, and on a smaller scale.

Yet the winter at Breslau, though one of hard work and much anxiety, was also not without its brighter features. The great victories of Rossbach and Leuthen formed a source of inspiration under which the king's pen was unusually active, turning out a vast amount and a wide variety of literary productions. A critical reader will wisely omit the diatribes which Frederic aimed at Soubise and Daun, though there are few odder things in history than the spectacle of this grim soldier following with volleys of flippant verse the rivals whom he had just defeated in battle.³ Not much can be said for the stilted rhymes in which Ferdinand of Brunswick is congratulated on his success against the French.⁴ But a much finer note was struck in a long ode to Wilhelmina. Its subject was the firmness and constancy of the princess during her brother's cruel trials ; and although it has no place, of course, among the great products of the imagination, its sentiments are noble, and the verse moves

¹ This was paid by Collignon out of the fifteen thalers which he received. Retzow, II. 187 n.

² Unless indeed the capitalization of the scutage due from the nobility can be called a loan—a device to which recourse was again had, as in the earlier wars. See *Hist. of Prussia*, III. 86, 87.

³ They are entitled respectively “Aux Écrasseurs” and “Congé de l'armée impériale et du maréchal Daun.”

⁴ Ode au Prince F. de Brunsvic sur la retraite des Français en 1758.

with a dignity which at times is not unimpressive.¹ In the intervals of work there was also much social gaiety, and much entertaining of guests. The king's sister Amelia and his two nieces of Schwedt shed their bright presence for a time upon the grim surroundings; D'Argens brought his good sense and good humor to the headquarters; and others came to join the balls and suppers, the concerts and readings, by which the long months were relieved. Indeed, Frederic's letters show that, with many changes of mood, his general inclination throughout the winter was to take a cheerful view of affairs. He often wrote about the coming peace; and a peace with some kind of solid compensation for Prussia was not quite foreign to his thoughts.²

Alike for Frederic and for Frederic's enemies, the most important event of this period was, however, the completion of a firmer union between Prussia and England. It was brought about very slowly, with much difficulty, and after not a little cross-play between the two courts. We have seen how his desperate situation in the summer of 1757, the duplicity of the Hanoverian ministers, and the irresolute conduct of England led the king to make, through several channels, secret overtures for peace with France; and in November, after Rossbach, these efforts were resumed. The new agent was a certain Count Mailly, a French officer taken prisoner in the battle. Released on parole by Frederic, he was commissioned to make inquiries at Paris about the disposition to peace with Prussia;³ but he was met by the flat refusal of Louis to negotiate except in concert with his allies, and Frederic seems to have treated this refusal as final.⁴ The various intrigues, of which this was the latest, could not well have been carried on in secrecy, since it was the direct interest of France, at least, to divulge them. Even before the release of Mailly, Frederic had been compelled to calm the suspicions of England. He met them disingenuously indeed by referring Mitchell simply to the unratified agreement with Richelieu about Halberstadt, ignoring the other and more ambitious

¹ *Épître à ma soeur de Baireuth*, 28 December 1757. All of these are in Vol. XII. of the *Oeuvres de Frédéric*.

² Evidence of this appears, *e. g.*, in Frederic to Knyphausen, 26 April and 21 May 1758, in both of which the envoy is confidentially instructed to get the sentiments of the English court on the "advantages" to be accorded Prussia at the peace. Cf. R. Koser, in the *Forschungen zur Brand. und Pr. Geschichte*, II. 257. Knyphausen, it should be explained, had lately been sent to London as a special envoy to reinforce without exactly superseding Mitchell.

³ See Frederic to Prince Henry and Eichel to Finckenstein, 19 November 1757.

⁴ See Mailly's report of Louis's answer, 30 January 1758, in *Pol. Cor.*, XVI. 307 n; Frederic to Prince Henry, 25 February 1758. Prince Henry was a sort of go-between in the business, which Frederic probably never regarded as very promising.

schemes which he had set on foot at Paris. But in the same interview he agreed positively to conclude no separate peace, if George II. would make a similar promise.¹ This declaration was, however, not so much an announcement of new conditions, or a sudden outburst of good faith, as a statement of relations brought about by recent military events, by the revived energy of England, by the rupture of the convention of Closter-Zeven and by official assurances of the London cabinet. But since a general peace was impossible, and separate overtures were forbidden, nothing remained except to continue the war. Hitherto England had failed to do her part with vigor; weak statesmanship went hand in hand with bad generalship; and Frederic had borne the brunt of the fight. Now there was at least a man of firmness at the helm, and this suggested the rest. The problem for Frederic was to turn that man in the proper direction, to convince him that America was not the world, to lead him toward a full co-operation in the war on the continent.

The speech from the throne at the opening of parliament, and the earnest words ascribed to Pitt in the reports of the debate on the address, are proof that as to the principle his conversion was now nearly complete.² But this was only an initial victory. The details of co-operation for the coming campaign yet remained to adjust, and these proved to be stubborn and difficult. Pitt and his colleagues seemed almost to ignore the overwhelming military problems which confronted Frederick himself in their reiterated demands for Prussian troops to serve in Hanover. But Frederic was almost equally indifferent to the fact that England was at war with France in North America, in the West Indies, in Asia and on the high seas, as well as in Germany; and that instead of concentrating she had to distribute her resources. Technically he was doubtless right in denouncing her failure to send a fleet into the Baltic. But not otherwise; for in the interval since that project was broached, and, as Frederic held, adopted, the progress of the French arms in India and America had changed the situation, and made new demands both upon the army and upon the navy of England.³ Pitt had

¹ Mitchell's report, 9 November 1757. *Pol. Cor.*, XVI. 15, 16. Two or three days later Frederic writes to Wilhelmina, "depuis les derniers arrangements que je viens de prendre avec les Anglais, il m'est impossible de faire une paix séparée." *Ibid.*, p. 23.

² 1 December 1757. A version of Pitt's speech is given by H. Walpole, *Mem. of Geo. II.*, III. 88-90. Cf. Frederic to Mitchell, 19 December 1757.

³ This excuse was given to Frederic, and once at least he made in reply the complaint that the real reason must be a reluctance to offend Russia. Mitchell, 9 February 1758. *Pol. Cor.*, XVI. 228, 229. Is there perhaps the germ of a famous saying of Pitt's in the king's remark as reported by Mitchell: "The way to save America is not to suffer the French to become masters of Europe"?

therefore to redress the errors of his predecessors before he could adopt a positive and aggressive policy of his own. But there is another consideration which weighs in Frederic's favor. He was fighting in self-defence ; England for conquest. He aimed only to save the political and territorial integrity of Prussia, and had, originally at least, no further designs. But Pitt had imperial views. He planned the expansion of England, the enlargement of her domains in every part of the world, her supremacy on the ocean ; and rejecting the maxims of Walpole for those of William III., he made the defeat and humiliation of France a leading end in itself.¹ From an English point of view this was a defensible and perhaps a wise statesmanship. It may be said too that Frederic's own record gave him no right to expect that moral distinctions would be weighed very nicely in his behalf. But there was a difference between allies, one of whom was fighting for his very life against powerful enemies on every side, while the other was pursuing, or preparing to pursue, grand dreams of conquest ; and in the consideration of the rival demands which each made upon the other Frederic is entitled to have it taken into account.

Faults of temper and tact again made the difficulty greater than it intrinsically was. Frederic's tone had too much of the school-master ; and if Mitchell had faithfully reproduced it in his conversations with the ministers of the old, rich and powerful monarchy of England, they would have been not less amazed at the presumption of the margrave of Brandenburg than was Louis XV. a score of years before.² On purely military affairs Frederic's achievements clearly gave him the right to speak as an expert. Nobody denied that. But in the rank of princes age and pedigree still counted for something, and Frederic was in a situation where pride ought perhaps to have been made subordinate to policy. The English ministers seem for their part to have been sometimes wanting in delicacy, and to have given offense by the tone and manner even of their intended favors. The subsidy negotiations furnish a case in point. Frederic needed money, and England was willing, nay anxious, to furnish it. The amount, 670,000 pounds or 4,000,000 thalers, had been fixed without difficulty ; yet the correspondence about the terms and conditions of the final treaty was prolonged over several

¹ Finckenstein reports, Berlin, 4 April 1758, an interview with the English general Yorke, in which the latter gave a very interesting description of Pitt and his relation to affairs. *Pol. Cor.*, XVI. 364 seq. Yorke had been sent out to replace Mitchell, and was on his way to headquarters. But the matter was adjusted, Mitchell remained at his post, and Yorke returned to the Hague.

² Frederic suspected that Mitchell was not a faithful reporter, and reprimanded him frequently. Thus, 18 February 1758, "vos relations sont d'un secrétaire du sieur Pitt et non d'un envoyé du Roi."

months. Frederic hated both the word subsidy, and the thing itself. Obviously tact required the English government to treat the subject in a large and liberal manner; to make it easy for the king to suppress his pride; to cover its donation under the decent form of a contribution to the common cause; and not to bargain with the victor of Rossbach and Leuthen as with the petty master of a thousand German hirelings. But this wise, politic and natural discrimination failed. In return for the subsidy England insisted on the reinforcement of Ferdinand by a contingent of Prussian troops, and ignored the repeated demands for a British fleet in the Baltic. In his exasperation Frederic announced that he would not accept subsidies, though he had himself solicited them, from such a usurious power, and indulged himself in very strong language even against Pitt.¹ But he sent a small force to aid Ferdinand in his winter campaign; and this made a good impression in England, as had been intended. English troops were indeed still refused. The impossibility of dispatching a fleet to the Baltic was still maintained. But early in March the reasons for these decisions were set forth with so much frankness and cogency, both at London and at Berlin, and George II. promised such an augmentation of Ferdinand's army through Hanoverians, Hessians, and other German troops, that Frederic withdrew his opposition, and announced his willingness to conclude the treaty.² It was signed at London on the eleventh of April.

The preamble of the treaty declared its object to be the expulsion of the enemy from the territories of both parties, the defence of their allies, and the maintenance of the liberties of Germany. Then followed the four articles which formed the body of the instrument. The first contained the promise of the subsidy. By the second the king of Prussia engaged to use the money in supporting and enlarging his army for the benefit of the common cause. In the third the two powers gave mutual stipulations that neither would conclude any armistice, treaty of peace or of neutrality, except in conjunction with the other. The last article fixed the term for the exchange of ratifications. To the treaty itself was added a separate "Declaration" by the king of England, announcing some further pledges on his part. He undertook by means of subsidies to keep the allied army at a strength of fifty thousand, and to add five thousand more as elector of Hanover; to employ this force with the greatest energy in co-operation with the king of

¹ Thus to Mitchell: "I, who have said No to kings, am not to be dictated to by Mr. Pitt." Raumer, II. 447. Cf. *Pol. Cor.*, XVI. 253.

² Frederic to Mitchell, 10 March 1758.

Prussia; to occupy Embden with a British battalion, and to annoy the French by frequent descents on their coasts. The regret of the English government was expressed that it could not meet Frederic's wishes in the matter of the Baltic fleet; but this decision, so it was explained, was not inspired by consideration for any third power, meaning of course Russia. The friends and foes of one were the friends and foes of both, and England would change her tone at Stockholm and St. Petersburg whenever the king of Prussia should deem it advisable.¹ On the nineteenth of April Pitt laid the treaty before the House of Commons and defended his policy in a long and brilliant speech. It contained a glowing panegyric on the king of Prussia; insisted on the necessity of supporting him in the interests of England herself; announced that the single battalion which had been dispatched to Embden would be followed by others if need should arise; and made the significant declaration that Ferdinand's "army of observation" would, thenceforth, be an army of action.² The next day the appropriations called for by this convention, and the subsidy treaties, passed with only two or three dissenting votes.³

Before this treaty was signed Frederic had again taken the field, in execution of a plan at once novel and audacious. He stood between two enemies. The Austrians lay in Bohemia, inactive but expectant, while the Russians were pushing southward through Preussen, and across the neutral territory of Poland, toward the New Mark; so that it seemed necessary to attack and, if possible, defeat them separately before they could unite in overwhelming force. The Austrians were chosen for the first blow. But instead of marching directly upon them in their strong positions among the Bohemian mountains, the king decided on a diversion against Olmütz, in Moravia. The capture of this important city would have a great moral effect, would uncover the road to Vienna, and force Daun to leave his unassailable strongholds, in which case Prince Henry might have a chance against Prague from the side of Saxony. All these considerations were revolved in Frederic's mind, and discussed in his correspondence, during the early part of March. On the eleventh of that month he sent Prince Henry a full account of the plan.⁴

¹ Wenck, III. 173-178.

² From Knyphausen's report *apud* Schaefer, I. 566-568. The *Parl. Hist.*, XV. 783 seq., contains reports of two speeches, by members not named, which were evidently delivered in the course of this debate, but which are erroneously assigned to the debate of the early Anglo-Prussian treaty of January, 1756.

³ The total amount as given in the *Annual Register*, 1758, p. 130, is £1,845,630. This measures practically the cost of the war for that year on the continent.

⁴ *Pol. Cor.*, XVI. 303 seq. The departure of Soubise for the Rhine, and relief from danger on that side, made the task of the prince simpler. He had over 20,000 men.

The execution of this plan required, first of all, the recapture of the strong fortress of Schweidnitz, the only Silesian post of importance yet in Austrian hands. Frederic, with the bulk of his army near Landshut, covered the siege, which Daun made no attempt to break, but rather, in spite of Loudon's appeals and his own pledges, allowed to take its course; and after a short but brave defence of two weeks, the place surrendered on the sixteenth of April with five thousand prisoners. Then the rest of Frederic's plan unfolded itself. Carefully masking his real purpose, sending troops to reinforce Prince Henry and keeping up a show of movements in Daun's front, the king hastily led the rest of his forces in two columns into upper Silesia, and thence by way of Troppau and Jägerndorf into Moravia itself. On the fifth of May the Prussians halted before Olmütz.

Since the year 1742, when this city fell such an easy prey to Schwerin, its defensive strength had been much increased. New walls had been built at great expense, and with the best of engineering skill; the magazines had been enlarged; heavier guns had been mounted; and an ingenious system of sluices in the river March made it easy to flood the approaches to the town from the east.¹ Some nine thousand men were inside the place, with plenty of food and plenty of ammunition. As soon too as the Prussians approached, the general in command, Baron Marschall, made ready for defence by sending away the non-combatants, levelling the suburbs, arming the able-bodied citizens, and organizing all the resources of the city like a prudent and determined soldier. Yet it must have seemed no very difficult task to hold Olmütz until the very latest day when Daun, even using only ordinary diligence, should bring relief. The case was the more urgent too since the news of the invasion had spread consternation even to Vienna. Grave consultations were held, valuables were packed, and the empress-queen was urged to retire to Gratz, which she scornfully refused to do.²

The Fabius Cunctator of the Austrian army was, however, true to his own system of tactics. Long doubting, or professing to doubt, the seriousness of Frederic's design, he moved from Skalitza only on the third of May, and two days later fixed his headquarters at Leitomischl, fifty miles from Olmütz. From here he sent out small bodies of light troops under Loudon and Saint-Ignon to watch and harass the enemy. The latter even crossed the March to Prerau, a convenient point, either for observation or for action, and did excellent service on that side of the river. Two weeks

¹ W. Müller, *Geschichte der Hauptstadt Olmütz*, p. 222; Schaefer, II. 65.

² Arneth, V. 361.

later Daun moved to Gewitsch, and Loudon even occupied Konitz, still nearer. But in spite of Loudon's entreaties, the cautious field-marshal refused to give or accept battle, kept in impregnable positions, and allowed the siege to take its course. Frederic himself courted a decisive trial of arms. But he could not give all the odds, and the tactics of his adversary prescribed in effect his own. He found his army, loosely speaking, on the arc of a circle from Littau to Prossnitz, with the convex toward Daun, who could only reach the city from that side, the west, after a successful battle. Then an inner circle, drawn about the city itself, and commanded by Keith, formed the line of investment proper. The first parallel was opened on the twenty-eighth of May, and the siege guns began fire on the walls. For a whole month the bombardment continued. Although the engineers had miscalculated the distance, and many shots fell short, no little damage was done to the city and its defences. The duration and the fury of the cannonade against Olmütz were almost without a precedent.¹ The besieged, for their part, neglected no effort, however difficult and desperate. They worked their guns manfully; now and then a lucky shot exploded a powder magazine, or wrought disaster among the men in the trenches; while frequent sorties undid the work of laborious days, and delayed the progress of the siege. But Keith held to his task with patience and courage. The second parallel was opened on the sixth of June; and three weeks later, the third. The besiegers were now only two hundred yards from the wall. In expectation of an attempt by storm Marschall made preparations for throwing up barricades in the streets, and gave orders that the town should be defended from house to house, to the very last man.² But the assault never came. On the sixteenth of June Daun abandoned Gewitsch, and executed a skillful march, in a long circle and by difficult roads, to Predlitz, south of Olmütz; and on the twenty-seventh advanced due north to Prossnitz, on which one of Frederic's wings rested. He was thus in a position for decisive action either against the main Prussian army, or toward the city itself, should the case become urgent. His orders were to save the town at any cost, even the cost of a battle.³

The situation of Frederic had now become desperate. He had not foreseen the obstinate resistance of the garrison, and the effect of the bombardment was disappointing. The wily Daun, who refused open battle and shifted his troops through secret defiles from one

¹ According to the G. S., II. 180, the Prussians used 81 siege guns, 19 howitzers, and 16 mortars.

² Müller, p. 237.

³ Arneth, V. 369.

unassailable position to another, was hemming him in ever more narrowly ; his ammunition was melting away ; and all his supplies had to be brought by long, difficult, and dangerous routes from Silesia. About the twentieth of June an enormous convoy of five thousand wagons, laden with powder, shells, money and provisions, set out from Neisse. It was the last hope of the besiegers. In view of its importance a force of eight thousand men under Colonel Mosel was detailed as escort, and Zieten with reinforcements was sent out to meet it. But the enemy, getting knowledge of the train, planned to attack it in the narrow mountain passes between Hof and Sternberg. The first attempt was made near Guntersdorf by Loudon, who had been sent out from Kaunitz, but it failed in its main object. Soon afterwards Zieten came ; and after he had arranged an order of march, the immense convoy, headed and flanked by troops, proceeded slowly forward as far as Domstätt, where on the thirteenth of June Loudon again fell upon it. This time he acted in union with General Siskowich, who had been dispatched from Prerau on the same errand, and a desperate conflict ensued. The Prussians fought with extraordinary courage. Over and over again they charged the enemy, pushing the great train forward whenever a brief opening was gained ; and when these tactics became impossible, they formed behind the wagons, and maintained the struggle from these rude breastworks. But the horses became unmanageable, the drivers fled in a panic, and all organization was lost. Three thousand wagons were captured or destroyed. The rear of the train, cut off by Siskowich, returned to Troppau, whither Zieten had to follow. Only a small part of the great transport came safely into Frederic's camp, and this was chiefly money, not precisely the most useful commodity at that juncture.

This was the beginning of the end. On the twenty-ninth of June there was a sharp fight near Prossnitz between two divisions of the rival armies, and the Prussians had the advantage. But it failed to develop into a general engagement. Two days later Frederic learned that the convoy had been broken up, that Zieten had been forced back upon Troppau, and that Daun had crossed to the left bank of the March. On the second of July the marshal was at Gross Tenitz, and in direct communication with the garrison. The Austrian historian says he found the enemy's position at Prossnitz too strong for attack, and hence made a further movement by the right in order to get nearer the besieged town.¹ This describes indeed what he did. In respect to strategy his object was, it is supposed, to avoid an open battle before Olmütz, to force Frederic to

¹ Arneth, V. 370.

raise the siege, and then to cut off his retreat, which was expected to take place by the same route as the invasion. But instead of trying to return by Upper Silesia, Frederic struck boldly across into Bohemia along the very roads which Daun had taken on his way to Olmütz; and on the fourteenth of July, with the loss of only a few mortars, and after slight skirmishes with Loudon, who followed in pursuit, he arrived in the vicinity of Königgrätz.¹ Thus ended an enterprise which is usually reckoned among the capital mistakes of Frederic. With it ended also the system of aggressive tactics to which it belonged. For the rest of the war the only object of Frederic's measures was to keep the enemy from his own doors. Prince Henry had likewise failed in his part of the general plan, the attempt upon Prague, or rather, had hardly made an effort to perform it. Early in May the fifteen thousand Austrians left to cover the city were joined by the army of the Empire, somewhat restored in numbers and discipline, though still in a very imperfect condition, and less formidable in fact than on paper. But its march to the Elbe left open a region in the Upper Palatinate and Franconia, which Prince Henry at once invaded with a considerable force. Hof was captured and Nuremberg threatened; heavy contributions were levied in the bishoprics of Würzburg and Bamberg; the active Mayr repeated his exploits of the previous year; and a widespread panic was caused among the princes allied with Austria. But after these demonstrations Prince Henry returned with his troops in the middle of June to Saxony.

Ferdinand of Brunswick was more successful. With the consent of George II., with whom, or with whose ministers, he now kept up a regular correspondence, he planned a passage of the Rhine, and a fresh movement against the French before they should have time to complete the reorganization of their army. The negotiations with Dutch boatmen, whose services were indispensable in the absence of bridges, caused some delay, and robbed the enterprise of the suddenness which the prince had aimed to give it; but Clermont himself interposed no obstacles, and on the second of June the larger part of the allied army successfully crossed the river near Lobith. With this force Ferdinand at once moved against the enemy, who everywhere fell back as he advanced. Instead of showing a desire to fight, Clermont long refused all challenges, and seemed anxious only to find a safe retreat behind the Meuse, so that the prince had little difficulty in bringing the rest of his forces across

¹ Arneth, V. 389, denies that Daun was wholly surprised by this turn of things. But on the previous page he himself shows that all the preparations against Frederic's retreat were toward Silesia.

the Rhine by the middle of the month. Then the pursuit continued. But the French ministry of war had now been for some time in the hands of Belleisle, and the result of his energetic efforts to improve the fighting capacity of the army gave him a right to demand of it something better than mere skill in evading the foe. Clermont received orders therefore to hold the lower Rhine at any cost.¹ For the purpose of a stand he chose a position behind the town of Crefeld and the villages to the west, a position of great natural strength, protected by hills, woods, swamps and ravines, as well as by an old line of earthworks formerly erected as a frontier defence. His force reached a total of some forty-five thousand men, while the allies had not much over thirty thousand. But Ferdinand knew his adversary ; and as soon as he had examined the ground, he decided, in spite of its obstacles and his own inferior strength, to give battle the following day, the twenty-third of June. He divided his army into three columns, which advanced by as many different routes. The left and centre moved by the easiest roads for feigned attacks, while the real battle was to be given by the right, which Ferdinand commanded in person. The paths which it had to follow were so narrow and so obstructed that at times the troops could only march two abreast ; but they worked their way slowly around the enemy's left, and attacked it near the village of Anradt with foot and horse. Clermont hurried up with reinforcements, and for a long time the flower of the French army contended desperately with the mixed levies of the prince of Brunswick. But in the end the generalship of Ferdinand and the good conduct of his troops prevailed ; the French sullenly retired ; and the day closed with the triumph of the allies. The battle was really won by half the army, acting at first without supports, and on the most difficult part of the field. The prince has therefore been sharply censured by critics of weight for the recklessness of his tactics, though others have called his plan a masterpiece in the art of war.²

After the victory Ferdinand made haste to gather its fruits. Düsseldorf and many lesser towns were captured ; Wesel was invested ; and the allied army advanced as far as the Meuse, where supplies were abundant and the soldiers lived for a time in luxury. A decisive campaign in the Austrian Netherlands, which the prince ardently desired, was indeed impossible without the co-operation of

¹ Stuhr, II. 90. But see also p. 91, which shows some confusion or conflict in the instructions. Clermont afterwards pleaded this in his own defense.

² Napoleon was one of the unfavorable judges ; other opinions for and against are collated by G. S., II. 103. The losses are usually placed at about 4000 for the French and less than half as many for the allies. Ferdinand's own report to England is in Knessebeck, I. 122 seq.

an English force to be landed on the coast of Flanders ; but this bold passage of the Rhine and the brilliant victory at Crefeld made a deep impression throughout all Europe. Pitt and his colleagues now saw with clearer eyes the interest of England in the war on the continent. To the single battalion, which in the treaty with Prussia had been designed to occupy Embden, were now added further installments of both foot and horse until the total reached nearly ten thousand of the choicest troops of the British army. Under the duke of Marlborough they completed their landing in the first half of August, and made ready to co-operate in the further measures of Ferdinand. But these measures were now affected by the hostile movements of the enemy.

HERBERT TUTTLE.

(To be continued.)